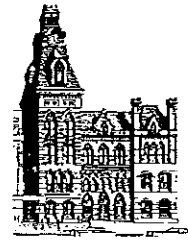




John DeStefano, Jr.
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**Testimony of the City of New Haven
Before the Commerce Committee**

Regarding

**H.B. No. 5342 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STATE'S BROWNFIELD
REMEDiation AND DEVELOPMENT STATUTES**

Submitted by

Helen Rosenberg
Office of Economic Development, City of New Haven
March 6, 2012

The City of New Haven would like to express support for HB 5342, which will expand the eligibility for Brownfield loans to include projects that produce "affordable housing units, suitable for first-time home buyers, incentive housing zones, workforce housing and other residential purposes, as approved by the commissioner." While current law includes housing to "serve the needs of first-time home buyers" the revised language recognizes the high demand for workforce housing in our communities.

It is important to recognize that there are many environmentally contaminated properties in center cities. Not all of them are suitable for industrial reuse and some are in fact suitable for housing, subject of course to a high cleanup standard. In New Haven, with the economy continuing to grow, there is an increasing need for workforce and market rate housing. In order to attract and retain residents to live and work in New Haven, there is strong demand for individual and multi-family housing at 80% to 120% of the adjusted median income (AMI) in close proximity to public transportation. These revisions will add a new incentive to help close the gap in financing these projects at a critical time for urban redevelopment.

Moreover, we urge the committee to consider additional revisions to the statute to mirror the criteria used in the jobs bill, PA 11-1 of the October Special Session. This act which develops a program for the remediation of state owned Brownfield gives priority to projects that "(1) have economic development viability, (2) have a predetermined end use, (3) are located in a municipality with an unemployment rate that exceeds the state's average unemployment rate, (4) have access to transportation or other infrastructure, (5) are of an environmentally urgent nature" among others. Mirroring these priorities will help to incentivize the principles of smart growth to reduce sprawl. We would further urge the committee to consider additional criteria that prioritizes projects that are consistent with regional CEDS or support reinvestment in state enterprise zones and rehabilitation areas.

We thank the committee for their continued commitment to rehabilitating Connecticut's Brownfields.